

already; what we'd like is a little help raising our children. I do not believe we should discriminate against parents who are working and raising their children in the availability of the children's tax credit.

In short, the tax plan cuts in half the tax cuts for those who go to community college. It shortchanges 6 million families who are already in the work force and having to pay for their child care. That does not meet the standards of fairness to families and promotion of education, nor do I believe it is consistent with the budget agreement. So I hope that the House Democrats and Republicans and the Senate Democrats and Republicans will work with us to meet those tests.

Finally, let me just say one other thing. The people of the Dakotas and Minnesota earned the great compassion and concern of all Americans because of what they went through this year. We've worked hard to help them stave off the worst, to get their communities back together, to rebuild. It has been 80 days since I forwarded to Congress my request for disaster relief to allow the process of recovery to begin. Instead of giving me a disaster relief bill, the

congressional majority insisted on weighing it down with a political wish list. In the name of the people who have had to face the floods, in the name of the families who suffered and need their help now, I ask the majority to put aside the political games, to set aside the political wish list—we can negotiate on all this later—and instead just send me a straightforward disaster relief bill. Again, I believe if this were a question on an elementary school exam, 90 percent of the fourth graders in America would say, do the right thing, and have your political arguments later.

So as we celebrate today, let's do the right thing and resolve that we're not going to stop until we get those TIMSS tests and we're first in the world at the 4th grade level, at the 8th grade level, at the 12th grade level. Our fourth graders have proved that we can do it. We dare not let them and the other children of this country down.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky.

Remarks at the Juvenile Justice Conference June 11, 1997

Thank you very much, Attorney General Reno, Ray Kelly, Father O'Donovan. Let me say to my good friend Father O'Donovan, I never know when I come to Georgetown whether being introduced as the university's most well-known alumnus will be a liability or an asset. It just depends on what month I come, I think. When Ray Kelly said he considered the Jesuits the Marine Corps of the Catholic Church, I never really thought of that. And then he went through that litany, you know, "the few, the proud" and all that, I was thinking about the ones who taught me in class. I was thinking, "the few, the proud, the brutal." [Laughter] But brilliantly brutal.

I love this place, and I thank Father O'Donovan for having us here at the conference. I also want to thank the Attorney General and Ray Kelly for the truly unprecedented partnership that they have established with local law

enforcement officials and others who are interested in the safety of our streets and our children throughout the United States. We have here representatives of the Fraternal Order of Police, of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the law enforcement community, a lot of other people who just work with young people and try to help give them something to say yes to.

I'm glad to see our friend Jim Brady here. The country owes a lot of thanks to Jim and to Sarah, for with courage and persistence and good humor, they have saved a lot of lives with the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, and others.

We are here today to talk about what we can do together to build safer neighborhoods and stronger neighborhoods as part of the preparation of America for a new century. Today I want to talk about violent youth gangs and

the illegal guns they use, the biggest problem, perhaps, we still face in that ongoing struggle.

But as Ray Kelly said, this is a good time to be involved in law enforcement because the good guys are winning and the tide of crime is being rolled back. Four and a half years ago, I can honestly say, when I went around the country in 1992 seeking the Presidency and began to talk about the importance of more police and effective prevention programs along with tougher punishment—and actually I said I was confident that we could bring the crime rate way down over a sustained period of time—most people did not believe me.

You might be interested to know that every national survey I've seen says that most people still don't believe it. [*Laughter*] Even though those of you who are involved in this endeavor know that crime is now down for several years in a row and we had the largest drop in 35 years last year, most people still don't believe it. It may be because a crime story still leads the evening news. It may be the accumulation of personal experiences; nearly everybody has someone in their family who has been victimized. It may be an instinctive feeling that whether the crime rate has gone down or not, it's still too high and there are still too many of our children at risk.

But nonetheless, it has gone down. And a lot of you in this room have helped to make it so. And we tried to work with you and also to learn from you what actually works, not what sounds good in a television ad, not what sounds good in a political campaign, but what actually works: putting more police on the street, taking gangs and guns off the streets, having proven, effective prevention programs that keep our children out of trouble and prevent crimes from occurring in the first place.

That's what we tried to do with the crime bill and the Brady bill, with the assault weapons ban, with the violence against women act, and the other things that the Attorney General spoke about. It's what we've tried to do with our strongest effort ever to make our schools drug-free and gun-free, to have zero tolerance for guns in schools, to make it illegal for minors to possess handguns and for adults to transfer handguns to minors. It's what General McCaffrey is working so hard on in his position as our Nation's drug czar.

And thanks to all of you, the strategy is working. Even the juvenile crime rate showed some

decline in 1995, and the juvenile crime arrest rate has begun to go down as a result of your unceasing efforts. But we know that juvenile violence is still a huge problem. We know violent youth gangs still terrorize our streets. We know innocent children are still being swept up in them and may soon be innocent no longer.

According to a report released by the Justice Department, unless we act and do more now, the number of juveniles arrested for violent crimes will more than double by the year 2010. We have got to show the same progress with young people, with juvenile crime, with violence, that we have seen in the overall crime rate with adults in the last 5 years. Keep in mind, this year when school started, we had the largest class of children starting school and the largest number of people in school in the history of America. This year is the first year that the number of schoolchildren exceeded the high watermark of the baby boom, which means that demographically we have just a few years to deal with our young people and give them a future and something to say yes to and to deal with this gang and drug and gun problem before the sheer change in population will begin to overwhelm our efforts.

So I think we know enough and a lot of you have shown us enough to be just as optimistic about this as we now can be about the general problem of crime. But we also have seen enough and we know enough to know that we have to move and move now.

In February, I sent juvenile justice legislation that I felt was very smart and very tough to Congress to declare war on gangs and guns but to do things that you say and that you have shown will work. It was largely modeled on Boston's famous Operation Cease-Fire. It guarantees new antigang prosecutors that are desperately needed to pursue and prosecute violent juveniles. It gives prosecutors the right to seek tougher penalties. It supports initiatives like Operation Night Light in Boston, where police and probation officers actually make housecalls to young probationers and their families to make sure that they live up to the rules of their probation. And when I was in Boston, not very long ago—we spent over a half a day there—the people said that their compliance rate was around 70 percent, which I'm quite confident is the highest in the country. But these things will work.

Because about 40 percent of juvenile crime occurs after school closes and before parents come home—so much for the argument that parents don't make any difference—the youth violence strategy we presented would help to launch 1,000 after-school initiatives all over the country, again, modeled on what is working today—not rocket science, just following the leader to save lives.

We know now that children should be allowed to stay in school or involved in other activities rather than left on street corners until their parents come home from work. We know now that it would be better if our children had teachers or community leaders or team leaders as role models, not gang leaders. We know that our children should be supervised by caring adults, not young people who have entered a gang culture.

The bill that I presented dealt with all this. It also is just as tough on guns as on gangs. I don't care what anybody says—guns are still at the heart of the gangs that strike at the hearts of our communities and families. Every year thousands of children and young people are killed by them, even more wounded and maimed. Listen to this: Teenage homicides by firearms tripled in the 10 years between 1984 and 1994, and the number of juveniles actually killing with guns quadrupled during the same period.

When the National Center for Health Statistics tells us that teenage boys are more likely to die from gunshot wounds than from any other cause, we know that we have more than a duty, we have a moral obligation to keep fighting against this terrible scourge of gun violence, to build on the pathbreaking work done by Jim Brady and others, and to go beyond what we have done so far.

That's why the juvenile crime bill I presented to Congress extends the Brady bill to prevent juvenile criminals from purchasing guns when they reach legal age. You shouldn't be able to commit a violent crime at 16 or 17, then buy a handgun for your 21st birthday. This bill would make that illegal, and I hope all of you will help us pass it.

The bill also requires that child safety locks be sold with guns to keep children from hurting themselves or each other. Unbelievably, a third of all privately owned handguns in our country are left both unlocked and loaded. Every one of them has the power and the potential to

make the life of one of our children lost by accident or design. Child safety locks are simple and inexpensive, but they do have the power to prevent tragedy.

I feel so strongly about them that in March I ordered Federal agencies to give them to our agents. Today, every FBI and ATF agent has such a child safety device, and by the 15th of October, every Federal agent, from the DEA to the U.S. Marshal, to the Border Patrol, to the Park Police, will have one as well. If a child safety lock is good enough for law enforcement, it ought to be good enough for the general public. These commonsense measures will help to cut off young people's access to guns that can cut short their lives.

Today we are taking comprehensive action to protect our children and our communities from juvenile crime and gun violence. In Boston, where many of these efforts are already in place, youth murders have dropped 80 percent in 5 years and not a single, solitary child has been killed with a handgun in a year and a half—in a year and a half. We can do that. Again I say, this is not rocket science; this is replication.

You know, when I was in Houston a couple years ago and I saw the juvenile crime rate going down there when it was going up everywhere else, the mayor said, "It's not very complicated. I've got 3,000 kids in a soccer league and 2,500 in a golf league, and most of them didn't know anything about either sport before we started." This is not rocket science; it is replication. We know what works. There is no excuse for not doing what works. And there is no excuse for the Congress not giving you the tools to do what works.

Now, I believe the approach embodied in the legislation I presented gives us the best chance to prevent more of this violence and to actually break its back. That's what I believe. I believe it because I have seen so many of you do it. Now, the bill that passed the House of Representatives, I think, falls far short of the goals of the bill that I presented and far short of reflecting what you have proved works. A juvenile crime bill that doesn't crack down on guns and gangs, that doesn't guarantee more prosecutors, more probation officers, and more prevention programs after school is a juvenile crime bill in name only.

I understand you can pass a bill and make it very popular if all it does is seem to penalize

people. And I am not against tougher penalties; we have toughened a lot of penalties since I have been President. But to pretend that you can do that and not guarantee the police, the prosecutors, the probation officers, and the prevention programs and expect to have results is simply wrong. You work in this area, and you know it. So let's go back to the Congress and get a bill that will give you the tools to give our children their futures back and our people their neighborhoods and their streets back. We can do it together.

Let me just say something about one specific problem. The illegal guns that youth gangs use do not just come out of thin air. They are bought and sold, traded and given in trade, just like any other guns. And all too often, it is adults who are making the transfer. So today, I'm directing the Secretary of the Treasury, Bob Rubin, to require all federally licensed gun dealers to post signs in their stores and issue written warnings with each gun they sell to put adult gun purchasers on clear and unambiguous notice that selling or giving a handgun to a minor is dangerous, it is wrong, but it is also against the law, and it is a felony so serious that it can carry a penalty of up to 10 years in prison. I want every adult who buys a gun to see that sign and think about it before they give a child a gun that could wind up in gang violence.

In the last 4 years, we have proven that if we work together and learn from each other, we can begin to turn the tide and win the war, as Ray Kelly said. Now we have an opportunity that is real and genuine to build on that progress. Your presence here, your enthusiasm, and what I know about the work you have done back home give me great hope that we can give our children a safe and orderly environment where they can make the most of their lives.

We know that a lot of this will have to be done at the community level. When we did the Summit of Service that the Presidents sponsored in Philadelphia, one of the five things we said we wanted for our children was a safe environment for every child in America to grow up in. And we know that a lot of that has to be done by you. But we also know that we at the national level have our responsibility, too. And our responsibility now is to continue to implement the crime bill and put the community police officers out there, to be faithful in our enforcement of all the Federal laws that we can, and to deal with the special problems of guns and to pass a smart, balanced juvenile justice crime bill that does more than talk tough.

I pledge to work with Congress of both parties to pass such a bill. I look forward to working with all of you to get the job done, but I say again: The most powerful argument for doing it is the experience you have already had, the successes you have already achieved, the lives you have already saved.

When you know what works and you do it and you see children's lives reclaimed, it becomes unconscionable not to do more. I am determined that we will do more and that we will win this incredibly important struggle.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:09 p.m. in Salon H of the Conference Center at Georgetown University. In his remarks, he referred to Under Secretary of the Treasury for Enforcement Raymond W. Kelly; Father Leo O'Donovan, president, Georgetown University; Sarah Brady, chair, Handgun Control, Inc., and her husband, former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady; and Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, TX.

Memorandum on Enforcing the Youth Handgun Safety Act

June 11, 1997

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury

Subject: Enforcing the Youth Handgun Safety Act

A major problem in our Nation today is the terrifying ease with which our young people gain illegal or unattended access to guns. Firearms

are now responsible for 12 percent of fatalities among all American children and teenagers. Criminal use of firearms by young people is a national tragedy. Between 1984 and 1994, the number of juvenile offenders committing homicides by firearms nearly quadrupled. Moreover,